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ACCORDING TO THE

JEWS AND PAGANS

SAMUEL E. STOKES

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE  
JEWS AND PAGANS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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With an introduction by the Rev. J. O. F. MURRAY,  
D.D., Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge.

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THE GOSPEL  
ACCORDING TO  
THE JEWS AND PAGANS

THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL  
ESTABLISHED FROM NON-CHRISTIAN  
SOURCES

BY  
SAMUEL E. STOKES.

EDITED BY THE  
REV. J. O. F. MURRAY, D.D.  
MASTER OF SELWYN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

THIS book has been put into my hands to see through the press for English readers. It was originally published by the Christian Literature Society for India at Madras. It is the work of an American who has given his life to the evangelisation of India. He is not a professional scholar or student of the Classics. But he has managed to collect practically all the most important passages bearing on his subject, and to put them together in a striking and original way.

His object in making the collection is clearly stated by himself in the General Preface. In India the publication was meant in the first instance to help educated Hindus to feel that the Life of Christ and the facts of the early development of Christianity enter into the main stream of the History of the Roman Empire and are capable of verification by the same evidence as that of the generally accepted facts of that history, and that in consequence they stand as facts on a very different ground from the legends of Krishna. What success has attended it in

the land where it first saw light it is difficult to say. The Hindu philosophy does not train men to attach the same importance to historical fact that we do in the West. I am glad, however, to learn that a second edition is already required for Indian consumption. There is no doubt, however, that the work itself will appeal directly to our Western intellectual needs. We shall never be able to retain our hold on any creed which is cut adrift from its connection with historic fact. And as long as there are any minds who refuse to credit, however unreasonably, a Christian's testimony to the facts of his own religion, there is real value in an appeal to 'The Gospel according to the Jews and Pagans'.

My work has consisted for the most part in verifying the references, revising the translations of the selected extracts, and supplying in the case of Pliny the younger a more recent account of the writer than that originally given, because Mommsen's researches have resulted in a new chronology which affects the date of his correspondence with the Emperor Trajan.

J. O. F. MURRAY.

SELWYN COLLEGE LODGE,  
CAMBRIDGE, 28 *August*, 1912.

## GENERAL PREFACE.

MANY Christians, and almost all non-Christians, seem to be under the impression that the credibility of early church history, and even the historical reality of Christ Himself, rests entirely upon the evidence of the early Christian community. I myself have often been asked how I knew that such a person as Christ ever really existed. I have even heard the gospel narrative spoken of as a 'legend,' the fruit of superstition or credulity.

Now it is only fair to give everything its due. Our faith in Christ as the Incarnate Word of God is, I admit, founded upon a spiritual experience, begotten of faith, and upon a belief in the authenticity of the four Gospels and the accounts contained in them. A discussion of these and similar questions does not come within the scope of this little book. It is written with one object—to demonstrate from other than Christian sources that the record of Christ, crucified under Pontius Pilate, in the days of the high-priests Annas and Caiaphas, is *history*; to prove further, that in the first century after his death men and women of all ranks and various nationalities worshipped him as God, and died rather than deny him. In order to

prove these points I have not turned for help to the New Testament, or to the writings of the Fathers of the first and second centuries of the Christian era, but have obtained information from the writings of famous Roman government officials, a Greek satirist, and a Jewish historian who was also a Pharisee. All these men were living within less than one hundred years of the time when Christ was executed. Far from being Christians, they were either persecutors of the church, or despised and scoffed at its members.

The subject will be dealt with as follows :—

In 'Section I' important passages from several famous non-Christian writers will be quoted, and the evidence contained in them will be discussed.

In 'Section II' the facts ascertained by a study of the passages given in Section I, will be collected and woven into a connected narrative, which will be entitled, 'The Gospel according to Jews and Pagans'.

In the 'Appendix' two passages will be considered, which, on account of their later date, I have not thought advisable to introduce into the body of the book. It is hoped, however, that no one will fail to read this Appendix, as it contains much that is both interesting and important.

Of course the information which we can obtain from our witnesses will be only a bare outline of the gospel story. No reasonable person could ask for more from those who took no interest in the Christian religion, and only referred to its followers in the course of the discussion of other matters. These men looked on the Christians

as a sect of religious fanatics. It is therefore not likely that they would regard them as anything but a problem, or that they would take the trouble to examine their creed.

And yet the thoughtful reader will perceive that such evidence is more valuable than anything more direct would be. Better witnesses could hardly have been chosen, for they are all of them men of weight in the world of letters, and two of them famous as historians.

Possibly those who doubt the authenticity of the Christian records will give ear to Pliny, Tacitus, Lucian, and Josephus, who, whatever they were, were not followers of Christ.

In conclusion I wish to say that nothing in this book is new, or newly set forth by me. It has all been said, and much better said, before. The only difficulty is that the works in which such information may be found are too expensive to be within the reach of any except those who are willing to spend largely on books, and so elaborate that few could afford the time to read them. Moreover there is not, I think, any single work in which all the passages here given with their texts are to be found.

Had such a book been put in my own hands at a time when I did not believe in Christ, it would have been a great help to me. It is my hope and prayer that this may be a help to some enquirer now, and may make those who read it feel that this, our Christian religion, which has exercised such a vast influence over the history of the world, is itself beyond all doubt founded upon history, and therefore demands our most careful and earnest consideration.

TO  
THE BOYS  
OF  
MOHEGAN LAKE SCHOOL,  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK,  
WHERE FIRST, AS A BOY, THE AUTHOR  
LEARNED TO KNOW AND LOVE CHRIST  
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS  
DEDICATED.



# THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE GOSPEL.

## SECTION I.

### REFERENCES IN SECULAR LITERATURE.

WE shall begin Section I with a quotation from the works of Caius Cornelius Tacitus, statesman and historian. He was a boy of nine when Rome was burned, and would therefore clearly remember the event and the circumstances attending it. Accounts of him are to be found in all Encyclopædias and Roman Histories. The following, though brief, is all that we need insert here:—

‘TACITUS, a celebrated Roman historian, was born about A.D. 55. The events of his early life are not recorded. He entered the public service in the reign of Vespasian (A.D. 69-79) and married a daughter of C. Julius Agricola, the famous general, in A.D. 78. He was an intimate friend of Pliny the Younger, from whose letters we derive a large part of the knowledge which we have of his life. In the year 88 he obtained the office of Prætor. He was one of the most eloquent orators of his time. In the reign of Nerva he became Consul, A.D. 97. . . . His reputation is chiefly founded



upon his *Annals* (Annales) in sixteen books, which record the history of the Roman Empire from the death of Augustus A.D. 14 to the death of Nero A.D. 68.'

In the following passage Tacitus is speaking of the burning of Rome (A.D. 64) and commenting upon Nero's method of turning public suspicion from himself. He writes (*Ann.* xv. 44):—

So to stifle the report, Nero put in his own place as culprits, and punished with every refinement of cruelty, the men whom the common people hated for their secret crimes. They CALLED THEM CHRISTIANS. (1)<sup>1</sup> CHRIST, FROM WHOM THE NAME WAS GIVEN, HAD BEEN PUT TO DEATH IN THE REIGN OF TIBERIUS BY THE PROCURATOR PONTIUS PILATE (2) and the pestilent superstition checked for a while. (3)<sup>2</sup> AFTERWARDS IT BEGAN

Ergo abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos et quæsitissimis poenis adfecit, quos per flagitia invisos vulgus CHRISTIANOS APPELLABAT. AUCTOR NOMINIS EJUS CHRISTUS TIBERIO IMPERITANTE PER PROCURATOREM PONTIUM PILATUM SUPPLICIO AFFECTUS ERAT; repressaue in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursum erumpebat, NON MODO

<sup>1</sup> The numbers in brackets correspond with the numbers inserted from time to time in Section II.

<sup>2</sup> We know from Roman history that the Emperor Tiberius died in what we would reckon now as A.D. 37. Within less than a year before the death of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate gave up his office in Judea after having tarried there ten years (Josephus, *Antiquities*, Bk. XVIII, ch. iv. 2) and set out for Rome to defend himself against certain charges made against him. Hence he must have been appointed procurator of Judea in what we would now reckon as A.D. 26-27, and must have held that post until A.D. 36-37.

TO BREAK OUT AFRESH NOT ONLY IN JUDEA WHERE THE MISCHIEF FIRST AROSE, BUT ALSO AT ROME, where all sorts of murder and filthy shame meet together and become fashionable. In the first place then some were seized and made to confess, then on their information (4), a VAST MULTITUDE were convicted, not so much of arson as of hatred of the human race. (5) And they were not only put to death, but put to death with insults, in that they were dressed up in the skins of beasts to perish by the worrying of dogs, or else put on crosses to be set on fire, and when the day-light failed, to be burnt for use as lights by night.<sup>1</sup>

PER IUDAEAM, ORIGINEM EJUS MALI, SED PER URBEM ETIAM, quo cuncta undique atrocita aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque. Igitur primum correpti qui fatebantur, inde indicio eorum MULTITUDO INGENS haud perinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti sunt. Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contexti, laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus adfixi, aut flammam, atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur.

This passage is very famous. All scholars, Christians and non-Christians, agree that it is truly from the pen of Tacitus.<sup>2</sup> A better witness could hardly be found, or one whose statements would meet with more general acceptance. He was noted as one of the most sober and reliable of Roman historians, and all modern Roman

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, writing some years later (A.D. 120), says of this event: 'The Christians, a kind of men given to a new, and criminal superstition, were put to death with grievous torments.' *On the Life of the Cæsars*, Nero, 16.

<sup>2</sup> See Lightfoot, *S. Clement of Rome*, Vol. I, p. 75 n. 3.

Histories, dealing with the period of the early Roman Emperors, are based upon his *Annals*.

Let us examine the passage quoted above. In it we shall find that Tacitus makes us acquainted with the following facts:—

- 1 In the reign of Tiberius there was a Roman Procurator named Pontius Pilate.
- 2 At his hands one Christ was executed.
- 3 This Christ was the founder of the sect of the Christians.
- 4 Christianity originated in Judea.
- 5 It spread quickly to Rome.
- 6 It made converts so rapidly<sup>1</sup> that at the time of the burning of Rome the portion of the Christian community captured in that city could be spoken of as a VAST MULTITUDE.

It is hardly possible that the great historian could have been misinformed. He was writing about matters with which he was intimately acquainted, and about the affairs of an Empire in which he had held the highest office under the Emperor—that of Consul. In all other questions his statements are accepted as authoritative, and none but the most thoughtless would

<sup>1</sup> As we have shown in a previous note (p. 2) Pontius Pilate entered upon his office as procurator of Judea in A.D. 26 or 27. Now the burning of Rome took place, according to Roman historians, in what we should now reckon as A.D. 64. Supposing even that Christ had been put to death in the first year of Pilate's administration, the burning of Rome could not have taken place more than thirty-seven years after this event. It was in such a short space of time, or even less, that Christianity had spread from a distant province to the seat of the Empire.

venture to dispute his statements regarding the spread of the Christian sect. Moreover, it must be remembered that Tacitus was not dealing with affairs which had happened hundreds of years before his time. Under such circumstances a mistake would have been more possible. But he was writing of comparatively recent events—events, some of which had taken place during his own life-time, and even before his eyes. Add to this that his position as Consul gave him access to all the judicial records and provincial reports, and it will be easy to understand that for him to be mistaken in such matters would be well-nigh impossible.

Our second witness PLINY THE YOUNGER was a friend of Tacitus.

The following account of him is abridged from the article in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* :—

Publius Cæcilius Secundus, later known as Gaius Plinius Cæcilius Secundus (A.D. c. 61-c. 113) Latin author of the *Letters* and the *Panegyric on Trajan*, was the second son of Lucius Cæcilius Cilo, by Plinia, the sister of the Elder Pliny who adopted him by will. After a distinguished official career he was selected by Trajan as governor of Bithynia, under the special title of 'legate propraetor with consular power'. He reached Bithynia in September, held office for fifteen months or more and probably died in 113.

Among his friends were Tacitus and Suetonius.

We possess nine books of Pliny's *Letters*, and a separate book containing his *Correspondence with Trajan*. This *Correspondence* supplies us with many interesting details as to the government of Bithynia, and as to the relations between the governor and the central authority. It reflects the greatest credit on the strict and almost punctilious conscientiousness of the governor, and on the assiduity and the high principles which animated the Emperor.

Of these letters we here quote the famous one to the Emperor Trajan, bearing upon the treatment of Christians. It was written while Pliny was governor of Bithynia, and in the collection is the ninety-seventh of the tenth book.

It is my custom, Lord Emperor, to refer to you all questions whereof I am in doubt. Who can better guide me when I am at a stand, or enlighten me if I am in ignorance? In the investigations of Christians I have never taken part, hence I do not know what is the crime usually punished or investigated, or what allowances are made. So I have had no little uncertainty whether there is any distinction of age, or whether the very weakest offenders are treated like the stronger; whether pardon is given to those who repent, or whether nobody who has ever been a Chris-

Sollemne est mihi, domine, omnia de quibus dubito ad te referre. Quis enim potest melius vel cunctationem meam regere vel ignorantiam instruere? Cognitionibus de Christianis interfui numquam: ideo nescio quid et quatenus aut puniri soleat aut quaeri. Nec mediocriter haesitavi, sitne aliquod discrimen aetatum, an quamlibet teneri nihil a robustioribus differant, detur paenitentiae venia, an ei qui omnino Christianus fuit desisse non prosit; nomen ipsum, si



tian at all, gains anything by having ceased to be such; whether punishment attaches to the mere name, apart from secret crimes, or to the secret crimes connected with the name. Meanwhile this is the course I have taken with those accused before me as Christians. (6) I asked at their own lips whether they were Christians, and if they confessed, I asked them a second and a third time with threats of punishment. If they kept to it, I ORDERED THEM TO EXECUTION; for I held no question that whatever it was that they admitted, in any case, OBSTINACY and UNBENDING PERVERSITY DESERVE TO BE PUNISHED. There were others of the like insanity, but as these were (7) Roman citizens, I noted them down to be sent to Rome. In the course of the proceedings, as is often the case, the mere fact that the charge was taken notice of made it commoner, and several distinct cases arose. An unsigned paper was presented, which gave the names of many. As for those who said that they neither were nor ever had been Christians, I thought it right to let them go, when they recited a prayer

flagitiis careat, an flagitia cohaerentia nomini puniantur. Interim in iis qui ad me tamquam Christiani deferebantur hunc sum secutus modum. Interrogavi ipsos an essent Christiani: confitentes iterum ac tertio interrogavi supplicium minatus: perseverantes duci iussi. Neque enim dubitabam, qualecumque esset quod faterentur, pertinaciam certe et INFLEXIBILEM OBSTINATIONEM debere puniri. Fuerunt alii similis amentiae, quos, quia CIVES ROMANI erant, adnotavi in urbem remittendos. Mox ipso tractatu, ut fieri solet, diffundente se crimine plures species inciderunt. Propositus est libellus sine auctore multorum nomina continens. Qui negabant esse se Christianos aut fuisse, cum praeunte me deos appellarent et imagini tuae, quam propter hoc iusseram cum simulacris numinum adferri, ture ac vino supplicarent, praeterea male dicerent Christo,

to the gods at my dictation, made supplication with incense and wine to your statue, which I had ordered to be brought into court for the purpose together with the images of the gods, and moreover cursed (8) Christ—(9) NOT ONE OF WHICH THINGS (SO IT IS SAID) CAN THOSE WHO ARE REALLY CHRISTIANS BE MADE TO DO. Others who were named by the informer said that they were Christians and then denied it, explaining that they had been, but had ceased to be such, some three years ago, some a good many years, and a few as many as TWENTY. All these too not only worshipped your statue and the images of the gods, but cursed Christ. They maintained, however, that the amount of their fault or error had been this, (10) THAT IT WAS THEIR HABIT ON A FIXED DAY TO ASSEMBLE BEFORE DAY-LIGHT AND SING BY TURNS A HYMN TO CHRIST AS (11) GOD (OR A GOD); and that they bound themselves with an oath,<sup>1</sup> not to com-

QUORUM NIHIL POSSE COGICUNTUR QUI SUNT REVERA CHRISTIANI, dimittendos esse putavi. Alii ab indice nominati esse se Christianos dixerunt et mox negaverunt; fuisse quidem, sed desisse, quidam ante triennium, quidam ante plures annos, non nemo etiam ante VIGINTI. Hi quoque omnes et imaginem tuam deorumque simulacra venerati sunt et Christo male dixerunt. Adfirmabant autem hanc fuisse summam vel culpaesuae vel erroris, QUOD ESSENT SOLITI STATO DIE ANTE LUCEM CONVENIRE CARMENQUE CHRISTO QUASI DEO DICERE secum invicem seque *sacramento* non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent:

<sup>1</sup> The word translated 'oath,' is the *sacramento* of the Latin text. Coming in the letter, just before the account of the food which the Christians were in the habit of taking together, we probably have in this passage a misunderstood allusion to the Christian sacrament of the Holy Communion. Had the Christians told Pliny that they



mit any enormity but to abstain from theft, brigandage or adultery, not to break their word, and not to deny a deposit when demanded. After this was done, their custom was to depart, and meet together again to take food,<sup>1</sup> but ordinary and innocent food ; and even this (they said) they had given up doing after the issue of my edict, by which in accordance with your commands, I had forbidden the existence of clubs. On this I considered it the more necessary to find out from two maid-servants who were called MINISTRAE<sup>2</sup> (12), and that by torments, how far this was true ; but I discovered nothing else than a perverted and extrava-

quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum promiscuum tamen et innoxium ; quod ipsum facere desisse post edictum meum, quo secundum mandata tua hetaerias esse vetueram. Quo magis necessarium credidi ex duabus ancillis, quæ MINISTRAE dicebantur, quid esset veri et per tormenta quaerere. Nihil aliud inveni quam superstitionem pravam immodicam. Ideo dilata cognitione ad consulendum te decucurri. Visa est enim mihi res digna consulta-

were accustomed to come together on a fixed day in the early morning to sing hymns to Christ as God, and to take a sacrament, and that they bound themselves to abstain from evil, it would be only natural for the pagan governor, who was entirely ignorant of the Christian rite called the Holy Sacrament, to misunderstand them and associate the word in its current sense of 'an oath' with their assertion that they bound themselves to commit no crime.

<sup>1</sup> This is evidently a reference to the ἀγάπη or 'love-feast' of the primitive Church, referred to in St. Paul's epistles, the epistles of Ignatius, and elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> MINISTRAE is the Latin word for the Greek (diakonai). The ministrae here mentioned without doubt are deaconesses of the Church. This office has existed in the Christian Church from the earliest times, and it is interesting to find this very ancient reference to it in a pagan writer of such authority.

gant superstition. I therefore adjourned the case and hastened to consult you. The matter seemed to me worth taking counsel on, especially on account of the number of those in danger. For many of every age, of every rank, and moreover of both sexes are already or will be summoned to stand their trial. FOR THIS SUPERSTITION HAS INFECTED NOT ONLY THE TOWN, BUT ALSO THE VILLAGES AND COUNTRY; yet it seems possible to stop it and set it right. At any rate it is certain enough that THE (13) ALMOST DESERTED TEMPLES begin to be resorted to, that long disused ceremonies of religion are restored, and that fodder for victims finds a market, whereas buyers till now were very few. From this it may easily be supposed WHAT (14) A MULTITUDE OF MEN may be reformed if they are given a chance of repentance.

The above is a letter from the governor of a province to his Emperor asking for instructions. It was written in A.D. 112 less than ninety years after the appointment of Pontius Pilate as procurator of Judea.

Herewith we give an extract from the answer of the Emperor Trajan to the above letter.

tione, maxime propter periclitantium numerum. MULTI ENIM OMNIS AETATIS, OMNIS ORDINIS, UTRIUSQUE SEXUS ETIAM, vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur. *Neque civitates tantum sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est; quae videtur sisti et corrigi posse. Certe satis constat prope iam desolata templa coepisse celebrari et sacra sollemnia diu intermissa repeti pastumque venire victimarum, cuius adhuc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur. Ex quo facile est opinari, quae turba hominum emendari possit, si sit paenitentiae locus.*

Speaking of the attitude to be taken toward Christians he says :—

They are not to be sought out, but if they are accused and convicted, they must be punished—yet with the proviso, that whoso denies himself to be a Christian, and makes the fact plain by his action, that is by worshipping our gods, shall obtain pardon by his repentance, however suspicious his past conduct may have been.

Conquirendi non sunt : si deferantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt, ita tamen ut qui negaverit se Christianum esse idque re ipsa manifestum fecerit, id est supplicando dis nostris, quamvis suspectus in praeteritum, veniam ex paenitentia impetret.

This continued to be the attitude taken by all those Emperors who persecuted the Church. Every one was at liberty to save his life by recantation.

In the extract from Pliny we find evidence upon four points. (a) The attitude of the Christians toward Christ. (b) The attitude of the Christians toward persecution. (c) Church customs. (d) The spread of Christianity in Bithynia and Pontus :—

(a) The Christians worshipped Christ as God, and refused to worship other Gods, thus showing that they considered him alone worthy of worship.

(b) Although repeatedly threatened with death as the reward of disobedience, numbers of Roman citizens and others refused to deny Christ and worship the gods. Pliny, by repeating his question three times, gave them ample opportunity to save

themselves, and only when he could not overcome their 'unbending perversity' did he order them to execution.

- (c) Of their customs we hear that they had an appointed day for common worship. In the early morning service they sang antiphonally a hymn to Christ, as God, and covenanted together to abstain from all impurity and dishonesty in word and deed. Later in the day they again met to partake of a meal together.
- (d) We learn that Christianity had spread rapidly in Pontus and Bithynia. Scarcely seventy-five years had elapsed since the death of its Founder when the Christian religion had taken such a hold upon these provinces that the temples had become deserted, and the sacrifices had almost ceased. It was not confined to any one class or locality, but had penetrated from the cities to the villages, and even into the sparsely populated open country, so that multitudes of people—Roman citizens and Roman subjects—in every rank and of both sexes were numbered among its adherents, some of whom had been Christians for as many as twenty years.

The next witness was another famous pagan—LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA. In the *Dictionary of Biography and Mythology* we find this account of him:—

'LUCIAN, one of the most witty and original Greek writers, was born at Samosata, on the Euphrates, about A.D. 100. His principal works

are dialogues, written in pure and elegant Greek, on history, mythology, philosophy, and various other subjects. His object appears to have been to cure men of their prejudices and superstitions, and their foolish admiration of philosophic charlatans. His genius is eminently satirical, and his works are remarkably humorous; but some of them are censured as offensive to morality and religion.'

The following extract is from *Chambers's Encyclopædia*: 'A Semite by race but not by education, a subject of Rome but not a Roman, a writer of Greek, but not a Greek by birth, Lucian was by circumstances singularly freed from every tie, prepossession, or prejudice which might have stood at all in the way of his deriving the largest possible amount of amusement out of the world.' 'His extensive travels gave him abundant material, and his extensive reading gave him ancient instances to confirm and illustrate his experiences.'

In a dialogue by this writer, entitled *The Death of Peregrinus*, we find the following sections XI. and XII.:—

It was about this time that he (Peregrinus) learned the marvellous wisdom of the Christians, having associated with their priests and scribes in Palestine. And what else could you suppose? In a short time he showed them to be but children, being himself alone prophet, and priest, and convener and all rolled

ὅτεπερ καὶ τὴν θαυμαστὴν σοφίαν τῶν χριστιανῶν ἐξέμαθε περὶ τὴν Παλαιστίνην τοῖς ἱερεῦσι καὶ γραμματέυσιν αὐτῶν συγγενόμενος. καὶ τί γάρ; ἐν βραχεὶ παῖδας αὐτοὺς ἀπέφηνε προφήτης καὶ θιασάρχης καὶ ξυναγωγεὺς καὶ πάντα μόνος αὐτὸς ὢν. καὶ τῶν βίβλων τὰς μὲν ἐξηγείτο



into one. (15) And of their books some he expounded and interpreted, while many he actually wrote himself. (16) THEY (the Christians), IN SOOTH, STILL WORSHIP THAT GREAT MAN WHO WAS CRUCIFIED<sup>1</sup> IN PALESTINE, BECAUSE HE INTRODUCED INTO THE WORLD THE NEW RELIGION. For this reason Proteus (Peregrinus) was taken up and put into prison; which very thing was of no small service to him afterwards, for giving reputation to his impostures, and gratifying his vanity. The Christians were much grieved for his imprisonment, and tried all ways to procure his liberty. Not being able to effect that, they did him all sorts of kind offices, and that not in a careless manner, but with great assiduity; for even betimes in the morning there would be at the prison (17) aged widows and (18) little orphan children; and some of the chief men,

καὶ διεσάφει, πολλὰς δὲ αὐτὸς καὶ ξυνέγραφε. τὸν μέγαν γοῦν ἐκείνον ἔτι σέβουσι τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν ἐν τῇ Παλαιστίνῃ ἀνασκολοπισθέντα, ὅτι καινὴν ταύτην τελετὴν εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὸν βίον. τότε δὴ καὶ συλληφθεὶς ἐπὶ τοῦτῳ ὁ Πρωτεὺς ἐνέπεσεν εἰς τὸ δεσμωτήριον, ὅπερ καὶ αὐτὸ οὐ μικρὸν αὐτῷ ἀξίωμα περιποίησε πρὸς τὸν ἐξῆς βίον καὶ τὴν τερατείαν καὶ δοξοκοπίαν, ὧν ἑρῶν ἐτύγχανεν. ἐπεὶ δ' οὖν ἐδέδετο, οἱ χριστιανοὶ συμφορὰν ποιούμενοι τὸ πρᾶγμα πάντα ἐκίνουν ἐξαρπάσαι πειρώμενοι αὐτόν. εἴτ' ἐπεὶ τοῦτο ἦν ἀδύνατον, ἥ γε ἄλλη θεραπεία πᾶσα οὐ παρέργως, ἀλλὰ σὺν σπουδῇ ἐγίγνετο. καὶ ἔωθεν μὲν εὐθύς ἦν ὄρᾶν παρὰ τῷ δεσμωτηρίῳ περιμένοντα γράδια χήρας τινὰς καὶ παιδία ὀρφανὰ, οἱ δὲ ἐν τέλει αὐτῶν καὶ συνεκάθειδον ἔνδον μετ' αὐτοῦ διαφθείρον-

<sup>1</sup> Literally ἀνασκολοπισθέντα means 'fixed on a stake,' 'impaled'. The verb σταυρόω which is used in the New Testament, has exactly the same meaning. The first is derived from σκόλος, a stake, the second from σταυρός, which has a similar meaning. The Latin equivalent of these words was CRUX, which was originally and more strictly applicable to the simple upright stake, upon which the malefactor was nailed, bound or impaled (see Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, under CROSS).

having bribed the gaolers, slept inside with him. Fine dinners were taken in there (19) and their sacred discourses were carried on, and the excellent Peregrinus—for so he was still called—seemed a new Socrates to them. Even from the cities of Asia, some came, sent by the (20) Christian communities to relieve, encourage, and comfort the man. (21) It is incredible what expedition they use, in dealing with any matter that affects their body. In short they spare no expense. And in fact, Peregrinus received much money from them, and made no small profit on the score of his imprisonment; for these wretched people (22) have persuaded themselves **THAT THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY DEATHLESS, AND WILL LIVE FOR EVER, for which reason (23) THEY THINK SLIGHTLY OF DEATH, AND MANY WILLINGLY SURRENDER THEMSELVES. (24) And then their first lawgiver has persuaded them that they are all brothers one of another, when once they have transgressed and renounced the gods of the Greeks, and worship that (25) crucified Sophist of theirs, and live according to his laws. (26) Therefore they despise all things alike,**

τες τοὺς δεσμοφύλακας. εἴτα δείπνα ποικίλα εἰσεκομίζετο καὶ λόγοι ἱεροὶ αὐτῶν ἐλέγοντο καὶ ὁ βέλτιστος Περεγρίνος—ἔτι γὰρ τοῦτο ἐκαλεῖτο—καινὸς Σωκράτης ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὠνομάζετο. καὶ μὴν καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἀσίᾳ πόλεων ἐστὶν ὧν ἡκόντινες, τῶν χριστιανῶν στελλόντων ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ βοηθήσοντες καὶ ξυναγορεύοντες καὶ παραμυθησόμενοι τὸν ἄνδρα. ἀμήχανον δὲ τί τὸ τάχος ἐπιδείκνυνται, ἐπειδὴν τι τοιοῦτο γένηται δημόσιον. ἐν βραχεὶ γὰρ ἀφειδοῦσι πάντων. καὶ δὴ καὶ τῷ Περεγρίνῳ πολλὰ τότε ἦκε χρήματα παρ' αὐτῶν ἐπὶ προφάσει τῶν δεσμῶν καὶ πρόσδοτον οὐ μικρὰν ταύτην ἐποιήσατο. πεπείκασαι γὰρ αὐτοὺς οἱ κοκοδαίμονες τὸ μὲν ὄλον ἀθάνατοι ἔσσεσθαι καὶ βιώσεσθαι τὸν αἰὲ χρόνον, παρ' ὃ καὶ καταφρονοῦσι τοῦ θανάτου καὶ ἐκόντες αὐτοὺς ἐπιδιδόασιν οἱ πολλοί. ἔπειτα δὲ ὁ νομοθέτης ὁ πρῶτος ἔπεισεν αὐτοὺς ὡς ἀδελφοὶ πάντες εἶεν ἀλλήλων, ἐπειδὴν ἅπαξ παραβάντες θεοὺς μὲν τοὺς Ἑλληνικοὺς ἀπαρνήσωνται, τὸν δὲ ἀνεσκολοπισμένον ἐκείνον σοφιστὴν αὐτῶν προσκυνῶσι καὶ κατὰ τοὺς ἐκείνου νόμους βιώσι.



holding them merely as common property, and receiving them from one another without giving any particular security ; so if anyone come among them, who is a cheat, adroit, and capable of managing affairs ; forthwith he may get quite rich by imposing upon the simple folk.

καταφρονοῦσιν οὖν ἀπάντων ἐξ ἴσης καὶ κοινὰ ἡγοῦνται ἄνευ τινὸς ἀκριβοῦς πίστεως τὰ τοιαῦτα παραδεξάμενοι· εἰάν τοίνυν παρέλθῃ τις εἰς αὐτοὺς γόης καὶ τεχνίτης ἄνθρωπος καὶ πράγμασι χρῆσθαι δυνάμενος, αὐτίκα μάλα πλούσιος ἐν βραχεὶ ἐγένετο ἰδιώταις ἀνθρώποις ἐγγανών.

The extract from Lucian is rich in evidence of a most valuable nature. It tells us (a) of Christ and his teaching, (b) of the Christians and their attitude toward Christ and toward the world, (c) of their scriptures, (d) of the Church :—

- (a) It speaks of the Founder of the Christian religion as having been *crucified*, and says that he met his death in Palestine *because of what he taught*.
- (b) Of the Christians we learn that they *worshipped*<sup>1</sup> Christ. They believed that they were all brothers if they did this, and lived according to his laws, at the same time turning away from the worship of other gods. They thought that they would live for ever, hence it came about that they looked upon death as a trifling matter, and held property in little esteem,

<sup>1</sup> The fact that after the execution of Christ the Christians continued to *worship him* clearly indicates their belief that, though slain, he was nevertheless *living*. In other words they believed in a *life after death*, and considered themselves to be worshipping a *living Christ*,

keeping a common purse, and giving and taking money without any security. They were extremely active in dealing with any matter which affected their community, and when one of their number was arrested would follow him even into prison in their desire to serve and relieve him.

- (c) The Christians had BOOKS, and it was the custom of their teachers to expound these and comment upon them.
- (d) Peregrinus first came across the Christians in Palestine. There were also communities of them in some of 'the cities of Asia'. They showed the spirit of brotherhood existing among them by the interest which they took in the welfare of co-religionists, and their desire to help and comfort them, even when they were members of communities situated at a distance from themselves. Evidently they undertook the care of fatherless children, as 'little orphan children,' such as Lucian mentions, could not support themselves,—especially by ministering to people in prison. The reference to the service of aged widows will be understood by all who recall 1 Tim. v. 9-10.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported for good works; if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers . . . if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work.'

We shall only call upon one more non-Christian witness in this section. It is the famous Jewish historian Josephus, who was born at Jerusalem A.D. 37. When the Jews rose in insurrection against the Romans he was appointed governor of Galilee. Being captured by Vespasian he was present at the siege of Jerusalem as a prisoner. After the fall of that city (A.D. 70) he resided at Rome and devoted himself to literary studies. His two most celebrated works are *Jewish Antiquities* in twenty books, and a *History of the Jewish War* in seven books, in Hebrew and in Greek. The date of his death is uncertain. We only know that he survived Agrippa II who died about A.D. 100.

There are two passages in the *Antiquities* which speak of Jesus Christ,<sup>1</sup> but as the more important of the two is almost certainly an interpolation, and the other probably so, we will leave them both out of consideration. Nevertheless, although there is nothing to be found with regard to the Christ, with the exception of the two passages just mentioned, we shall find the witness of Josephus valuable in the extreme. Tacitus, Pliny, and Lucian have borne testimony to the fact of the life and death of the Christ, the faith of the Christians, the growth of the Church, and the sufferings endured by its members. It falls to Josephus to give us the historical setting of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles—to show that the state of affairs described in them, and the leading Jewish and

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.*, Bk. xviii, ch. iii. 3 ; Bk. xx, ch. ix. 1.

Roman figures depicted in them, were historical, and not merely the artistic setting of some 'cunningly devised fable'. To quote all passages verbatim will be impossible, as they are very numerous indeed, and Josephus is rather verbose. The texts that bear on the subject may be found in the *Antiquities*.<sup>1</sup> I shall only quote two passages in full.

The first great historical figure which meets us in the Gospels is Herod the Great, who sought 'the young child to destroy him,' and thwarted in this, ordered the massacre of all the babes in Bethlehem. The New Testament notices of him are brief in the extreme, but should any feel a curiosity to know more about this king, let them turn to the *Jewish Antiquities*, and read from the ninth chapter of the fourteenth Book to the eighth chapter of the seventeenth Book. There they will learn the character of the man who could order innocent children to be so slain. They will read of his craft and ferocity, and the jealousy with which he guarded his crown. Josephus tells how he advanced from murder to murder until even some of his own sons were strangled, or otherwise done to death, by his order, and how upon his death-bed he ordered the arrest of 'all the principal men of the entire Jewish nation,' and left instructions that they should all be slain with darts immediately upon his decease, in order that his funeral might be honoured with the tears of the entire Jewish people. In the

<sup>1</sup> Bks. XIII-XX.

remaining chapters of Book XVII we learn about the reign of Archelaus referred to in the first Gospel. Accounts are also given of Herod Antipas, and how he married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, during the lifetime of Philip, and how Herod, fearing 'John, that was called the Baptist,' cast him into prison in the castle of Machærus, and had him slain there (27). The following is the text and translation of this important passage :—

Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the BAPTIST; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism: . . . Now when many came in crowds about him for they were greatly moved by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it in his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man

Τισὶ δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐδόκει ὀλωλέναι τὸν Ἡρώδου στρατὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ μάλα δικαίως τινυννένου κατὰ ποινὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἐπικαλουμένου Βαπτιστοῦ. Κτείνει γὰρ δὴ τοῦτον Ἡρώδης, ἀγαθὸν ἄνδρα καὶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις κελεύοντα ἀρετὴν ἐπασκοῦσιν καὶ τὰ πρὸς ἀλλήλους δικαιοσύνη καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εὐσεβείᾳ χρωμένους βαπτισμῷ συνιέναι . . . Καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων συστρεφομένων, (καὶ γὰρ ἤσθησαν ἐπὶ πλείστον τῇ ἀκροάσει τῶν λόγων), δείσας Ἡρώδης τὸ ἐπὶ τοσόνδε πιθανὸν αὐτοῦ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, μὴ ἐπὶ ἀποστάσει τινὶ φέροι, πάντα γὰρ ἐώκεσαν συμβουλῇ τῇ ἐκείνου πράξοντες, πολὺ κρεῖττον ἡγεῖται πρὶν τι νεώτερον ἀπ' αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι, προλαβὼν



who might make him repent it when it was too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Mac-hærus, the castle I before mentioned, and was on this ground put to death.

ἀνελεῖν τοῦ μεταβολῆς γενο-  
μένης εἰς πράγματα ἐμπεσὼν  
μετανοεῖν. Καὶ ὁ μὲν ὑποψία  
τῇ Ἡρώδου δέσμιος εἰς τὸν  
Μαχαιροῦντα πεμφθεὶς τὸ  
προειρημένον φρούριον, ταύτη  
κτίννυται.<sup>1</sup>

Josephus also mentions that Herodias had a daughter Salome (28). We are told also about Pilate, the procurator of Judea, and concerning all his oppression and injustice, and how, after having held office for ten years in Judea, he was ordered by Vitellius, the governor of Syria, to proceed to Rome in order to answer the accusations made against him, and how while he was hastening to Rome the Emperor Tiberius died. As has been before remarked Tiberius died in what we now reckon as A.D. 37, hence the procuratorship of Pilate must have extended from what would be now reckoned as A.D. 26 or 27 to A.D. 36 or 37. He was succeeded, Josephus informs us, after a lapse of time, by Felix who married a Jewess, Drusilla the sister of Agrippa. An account is also given of the doings of the 'Egyptian' mentioned in Acts (xxi. 38) which Josephus<sup>2</sup> says took place during the procuratorship of Felix. In Book xx of the *Antiquities*, we are told that Porcius Festus was sent by Nero to succeed Felix. There is also a great deal about Herod Agrippa (the Herod

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.*, Bk. xviii, ch. v. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Ant.*, Bk. xx, ch. viii. 6 ; *Bell. Jud.*, Bk. II, ch. xiii. 5.

of Acts xii.) among other things an account (*Ant.*, Bk. xix, ch. viii. 2) of how, when he came into the theatre upon a certain occasion, the people began to cry out that he was a God, and how when he did not rebuke them for so speaking, he was immediately attacked by violent pains in the abdomen, and after five days died. It will be remembered that an account of this occurrence is also found in the book of Acts (xii. 20 ff.). The younger Agrippa and his sister Bernice (before whom, according to the writer of the Acts, Paul made his defence) are also mentioned by Josephus. Beside speaking of those who were considered the leading figures in the history of the times, he also informs us concerning the customs of the Jews, and the various divisions existing among them. He describes at length the two main divisions—the Pharisees and the Sadducees—and speaks of their mutual jealousy. The former, says Josephus (*Ant.*, Bk. xviii, ch. i. 3), had a very great influence over the people. He adds (*Ant.*, Bk. xiii, ch. x. 6): ‘The Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their Fathers, which are not written in the law of Moses’. Josephus himself was a Pharisee. Of the Sadducees he says (*Ant.*, Bk. xviii, ch. i. 4): ‘The doctrine of the Sadducees is this: that souls die with the bodies’. He describes all the festivals of the Jews with great minuteness, and comments upon the great multitudes who assembled at Jerusalem for the Passover. He speaks of the strictness with which the Sabbath was observed by the Jews, and says that it was



not lawful for them to travel far upon that day. He mentions a Theudas though probably this is not the Theudas referred to in the fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles by Gamaliel, also Judas of Galilee, spoken of in the same place. Not the least important information which he gives us is upon the high-priesthood of that period. He says that the procurator Valerius Gratus deprived the high-priest Ananus (the Annas of Luke iii. 2; John xviii. 13, 24) of his office, and put in his place, one after another, four Jews, the last of whom was 'Joseph Caiaphas' (the Caiaphas of the gospels).<sup>1</sup> Having made these changes Gratus returned to Rome, after holding office in Judea eleven years, and Pontius Pilate succeeded him.

Valerius Gratus, having put an end to the priesthood of Ananus (Annas) appoints Ishmael, the son of Fabi, high-priest, and having removed him after a little while he appointed Eleazar, the son of Ananus the high-priest, to the same office. (Notice that Josephus still calls Ananus the high-priest, although he has been removed by Gratus.) And

Οὐαλέριος Γράτος παύσας  
ιεράσθαι Ἀνανον, Ἰσμήλῳ  
ἀρχιερέα ἀποφαίνει τὸν τοῦ  
Φαβί. Καὶ τοῦτον δὲ μετ' οὐ  
πολὺ μεταστήσας, Ἐλεάζαρον  
τὸν Ἀνάνου τοῦ ἀρχιερέως  
υἱὸν ἀποδείκνυσιν ἀρχιερέα.  
Ἐνιαντοῦ δὲ διαγενομένου καὶ  
τόνδε παύσας, Σίμωνι τῷ  
Καμίθου τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην

<sup>1</sup>This, of course, furnishes us with an explanation of the seeming double high-priesthood referred to in Luke iii. 2, and again implied in John xviii. 13, 24. Ananus (or Annas) was the true high-priest. Caiphas (or Caiaphas) being appointed by the Government, was the high-priest recognized by the Romans as religious head of the Jewish nation. This being the case it is easy to see that both would have to be consulted.

having removed him also at the end of a year, he gives the high-priesthood to Simon the son of Comithus. But he likewise held the honour for not more than a year, when Josephus, called also Caiaphas succeeded him.

παράδιδωσιν. Οὐ πλείων δὲ καὶ τῷδε ἐνιαυτοῦ τὴν τιμὴν ἔχοντι διεγένετο χρόνος, καὶ Ἰώσηπος ὁ καὶ Καϊάφας διάδοχος ἦν αὐτῷ.<sup>1</sup>

Caiaphas continued to be high-priest during the ten years of Pilate's sojourn. Vitellius deprived him of his office, shortly after Pilate departed for Rome.

Although the above writings do not contain the name of Jesus,<sup>2</sup> or mention any of his followers, the reader will at once perceive that it is an extremely valuable part of the non-Christian testimony, in that it vouches for the truthfulness of the gospel setting, by testifying to the historical character of the Roman officials and Jewish high-priests who, the evangelists tell us, played such a tragic part in the history of the Master. Accounts of customs, sects, dates, etc., in Josephus, correspond and, at least in the main, agree with what we find in the New Testament. In fact we have the whole historical background of the four Gospels and of a portion of the Acts before us, when we read the *Antiquities* of

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.*, Bk. xviii, ch. ii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> In not referring to Christ Josephus has but conformed to the policy of all Jews of his own time. For hundreds of years, even when the Christian religion was engaging the attention of the whole Greek and Roman world, Jewish writers continued to be silent upon the subject, or if they spoke of Christ and the Christians, it was in the most covert way.

Josephus.<sup>1</sup> Herod the great, Archelaus his son, Herod Antipas, Herodias, her daughter Salome, John the Baptist, Annas (Ananus), Caiaphas (Caiphas) Pontius Pilate, Felix, and his Jewish wife Drusilla, Porcius Festus, Herod Agrippa, Bernice, Pharisees and Sadducees, all appear in the history of Josephus, and appear in the same relations to each other as we find them holding in the narrative of the New Testament.

<sup>1</sup> Bks. XVI-XX.

## SECTION II.

IN accordance with the plan of this treatise, as stated in the Preface, Section II will be devoted to a summary of those facts which were brought to light in the foregoing study.

One should keep in mind, while reading the following, that not a single statement in the whole account is drawn from Christian sources, and that all doubtful passages, purporting to be from the pen of non-Christian writers, have been rejected. Nor has use been made of passages which, although undoubtedly genuine, come to us from the works of early Christian writers. That many of these latter are authentic there can be no doubt whatever, nevertheless it has been thought best not to make use of them in building up a history which claims to be entirely independent of Christian sources. The writers quoted above and the passages given under their names are entirely above the suspicion of being influenced by Christianity, and therefore best serve the present purpose.

Nothing therefore will be found in the following narrative which cannot be found in the witness of Tacitus, Pliny, Lucian, and Josephus. All important passages in the extracts from these writers have been numbered, and corresponding

numbers have been placed after the passages dependent upon them in the following. Should the reader, therefore, question our right to make any assertion found below, he has only to discover in the text of the witnesses that number which corresponds with the number attached to the sentence about which he is in doubt, and he will learn our grounds for so doing.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING  
TO JEWS AND PAGANS.

In the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee,<sup>1</sup> and his brother Philip tetrarch of Trachonitis,<sup>2</sup> there was one JOHN whom men called the BAPTIST (27). He was a good man and exhorted the Jews to exercise virtue by acting righteously toward men and with piety toward God, and having thus done to come to BAPTISM. The people were much moved by his teaching and came about him in crowds, until Herod began to grow jealous of the great power which he (John) was gaining over their minds.

Herod was at this time living with the wife of his brother Philip (28). This was of course unlawful, as Philip was still alive. The woman's

<sup>1</sup> 'But Herodias, Agrippa's sister, who now lived as wife to that Herod who was Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea,' etc. (*Ant.*, Bk. xviii, ch. vii. 1).

<sup>2</sup> 'He (Herod the Great) also gave Gaulonitis and Trachonitis and Panees to Philip, who was his son but brother to Archelaus, by the name of a Tetrarchy' (*Ant.*, Bk. xvii, ch. viii. 1).

name was Herodias, and she had a daughter named Salome.

Perceiving that John had such influence over the multitude, Herod judged it best to have him seized. When this had been done he sent him to the castle of Machærus as a prisoner, and there had him put to death.

About this time there arose another teacher in Judea, called CHRIST (2). John had been slain on account of his influence; this Christ suffered death for what he taught (16). Pontius Pilate condemned him to death (2) and he was crucified (16) some time during the high-priesthood of Ananus (Annas) and Caiphas (Caiaphas).<sup>1</sup> Somewhat later Pontius Pilate was ordered home to defend himself against a number of charges of misgovernment, and Felix was sent to take his place. Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus.

But although Christ had been executed his followers and disciples continued to exist, and to increase in numbers (3). In fact with such rapidity did the 'sect of the Christians' grow and spread, that within less than FORTY YEARS after the death of its author VAST MULTITUDES of those who professed it were to be found in the imperial city itself (4).

These people believed that their crucified

<sup>1</sup> Caiphas was appointed High-priest by Valerius Gratus, the procurator previous to Pontius Pilate, and continued to hold that position until removed by Vitellius, Governor of Syria, who did not do this until his visit to Judea, which took place immediately after Pilate's departure for Rome. (*Ant.*, Bk. xviii, ch. ii. 2 ; iv. 3.)



teacher was God (11) and worshipped him as such (16, 24). Not fear of death itself could force true Christians to worship the Roman gods, or lead them into denying their allegiance to Christ (9). Over and over again, when life might have been saved by recantation, men persisted in declaring that they were Christians, and suffered death on account of it (6).

In fact they looked upon death as a matter of small consequence. This attitude was the natural outcome of a conviction that they would live for ever (22). For a like reason they despised the things of the world, and regarded them merely as common property (26). For it had been impressed upon them that they were all brothers from the moment they turned, and having forsaken the gods of the heathen, worshipped their crucified 'Sophist' and lived in accordance with his laws (24, 25).

They were accustomed to meet together upon an appointed day, in the early morning. When assembled they would sing antiphonally a hymn to Christ, and would bind themselves never to rob or steal or commit adultery, and never to break their word or fail in their monetary obligations. After the early morning service was ended they would scatter, and again later on in the day, would meet to partake of a simple meal together (10, 11).

They had BOOKS also, and it was customary for their teachers to expound these and comment upon them (15). Upon certain occasions they were also accustomed to have 'spiritual discourses' among themselves (19).

Women had a place in the work of the Church. Of these some were called 'MINISTRAE' which means helpers or servants (12). Aged widows too devoted themselves to works of mercy (17). Little orphan children were cared for, and themselves given a share in the work of ministering to those in trouble (18).

When the great fire devastated nearly half the city of Rome, the emperor, who found himself suspected of having caused the disaster, deemed it necessary to find some one upon whom he might fix the blame. At that time great numbers of Christians were living in the city, and Nero decided to make them his scape-goats. They were accused of having burned Rome, and a VAST MULTITUDE (4) were put to death in the cruellest manner. Some were dressed in the skins of beasts to be torn to pieces by dogs, and others were put on crosses, to be set on fire as torches when day-light failed. (5) This was the first persecution of which we have any record. The burning of Rome occurred in what we now reckon as A.D. 64.

But the spread of Christianity was not confined to Rome. In the provinces of Pontus and Bithynia it carried everything before it. Temples were almost deserted, the rites of religion fell into disuse (13). A multitude (14) of men and women—some Roman citizens (7) others Roman subjects—of every rank and all ages were followers of Christ. They were to be found not only in the cities, but also in the villages, and even in the open country. During the persecution carried on by Pliny, which took

place in what we would now reckon as A.D. 112 numbers of them were led to execution for refusing to worship the accepted gods, and for insisting that they were Christians, although repeatedly admonished by the governor of the danger of doing so (6).

### CONCLUSION.

Surely this is a most remarkable history. There is no trace of any other thing similar to it in the history of the world. In the light of sober reason are we not bound to confess that the only thing which could explain such a state of affairs would be the advent into the world of one who lived such a life as the Gospels claim for Jesus, and taught at least similar lessons to those which he is said to have given to men?

There is little to be added. We have seen that some time between 26 and 37 A.D. a man was put to death in Judea by the Roman proconsul. He was a Jew, and was put to death by a method considered at that time suited only to the lowest criminals.

We learn that almost immediately after his execution, a body of people sprang up who affirmed that this crucified Jew was God. It is evident that by professing this belief men endangered their lives, and it is equally evident that they could reap no material profit by pursuing such a course. And yet, in spite of the humiliating death of Christ and in spite of the torture and death awaiting his followers, the 'sect of the Christians' increased and spread with marvellous rapidity. It gathered adherents

from all ranks and various nations. They despised the things of the world, they loved each other, they died for Christ's name's sake, and they conquered the world by their devotion. The Roman government pronounced Christianity a *religio illicita*, and Roman officials received orders to stamp it out. Then for more than two hundred years the Christians suffered from the hatred of the world. Rulers attacked them with the sword and strove to annihilate them. Philosophers and scholars attacked them with the pen, and strove to show the foolishness of their faith. And what happened? The Christians conquered the world by their very unworldliness, and before three hundred years had elapsed after the slaying of Christ a Christian emperor sat upon the throne of the Cæsars.

This, and what followed through the centuries, is history. What tribe was able to resist Him? What place was so remote that His followers did not enter it, or what mountain-range so high that it stopped their advance? In those days the north of Europe was covered with vast tracts of forest, inhabited by savage tribes which were continually at war with each other, and propitiated their deities with human sacrifices. The ocean was swept by fierce Danish sea-robbers; no property was safe, and the taking of human life was too common to be looked upon as a sin. Men drank their liquor from cups fashioned out of the skulls of their conquered enemies, and slaughtered whole towns—men, women and children—from the very joy of bloodshed, and the hope of gain.

Christians say that Christ claimed to be 'The Light of the World'. Whether the claim be true or not each man must judge. This much we know, that with the gospel of Christ light dawned upon the hearts of our fierce and bloodthirsty forefathers. Believing that Christ had suffered for them, they dared not be unmerciful as before. With the story of the gospel came the vision of tender and unselfish love. Little by little their hard hearts were softened; gradually they learned love for their fellows. The old life became distasteful to them: the barbarities of war began to give way to nobler occupations. To-day what do we find? Much that is evil doubtless—much selfishness still, and pride, and love of power. But these are the fading shadows of the night. The sun has risen; the light is growing; but down in the valleys there is darkness still. Yet, because there is darkness here and there, let us not say that it is still night. Historians, both Christian and non-Christian, with one accord tell us that the light is steadily growing. Only the shallow-minded and those unacquainted with history keep crying that the world grows more and more evil. Students of social economics tell us that never in the history of the world has there been such an era of philanthropic activity; never has man felt such a deep responsibility for the welfare of his fellow-man, or striven so unselfishly to assist him. Again, we assert, knowing full well that every historian and student of human affairs will attest the truth of the assertion, that the light is growing brighter and brighter, and with each new



century evil practices become impossible which were countenanced in the century preceding.

What is the reason of this advance? Some answer this question in one way, and some in another. One thing is certain, namely, THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, as described in Sections I and II, WERE MANIFESTLY CONTROLLED BY SENTIMENTS ABSOLUTELY IN CONTRADICTION TO THE SENTIMENTS OF THE PEOPLE AMONG WHOM THEY WERE LIVING; that the faith which they professed gave them a remarkable power of rising superior to the opposition and the corrupting influences of the age in which they lived; and THAT IN THEIR CONCEPTION OF MUTUAL OBLIGATION, HELPFULNESS, AND BROTHERLY LOVE, WE SEE THE FIRST SIGN OF THAT ATTITUDE TOWARD HUMANITY WHICH MUST LIE AT THE ROOT OF ALL ADVANCE, AND WHICH IS RECOGNIZED AS THE TRUEST SIGN OF CIVILIZATION.

We cannot fully understand what an astounding contrast the Christian outlook presented to that of the pagan world in the first century of the Christian era, unless we have some conception of the state of awful corruption into which Greek and Roman society had fallen. The literature of the period was cynical in tone and full of the most shameless obscenity. The masses were entirely illiterate, and no provision was made for their education. In the cities a large proportion of the population consisted of slaves, who were looked upon as the property of their masters. Slave owners could beat, torture or kill their slaves, and the law proclaimed this to



be within their rights. Slaves were bought and sold in the open market like cattle. As porters they were chained in front of the gate, just as with us a watch dog, and at night they were shut up in the *ergastula* like animals in stalls. Like them they were branded and marked;<sup>1</sup> they were also flogged and crucified, often on the smallest provocation.<sup>2</sup> Generally the old and diseased were turned off without concern, or were killed outright as men kill a brute beast. So long as there was hope of profit from them they were spared, and when they died they were cast into a pit with dead animals. There were exceptions to these barbarities. A refined gentleman like Pliny the Younger shows great consideration for his own domestic slaves, and there are constant references to kindly treatment. But the terrible 'slave wars' show to what desperation the slaves were driven, and the general picture of the times is one of cruelty and vice in connection with slavery.

The cruelty and hard-hearted selfishness were only surpassed by the luxury and immorality. Small wonder that a note of consternation is apparent in the writings and speeches of the great men of the period. At the time when Nero was emperor, Seneca was the leading statesman and scholar of Rome. He thus describes the times:—

<sup>1</sup> *Inexpiabili literarum nota per summam oris contumeliam inustus Valer. Max. vi. 8, 7; Inscripti vultus, Martial viii. 75; cp. Cic. De Off. ii. 7.*

<sup>2</sup> *Juvenal, vi. 173-177.*

All things are full of iniquity and vice. More crimes are committed than can be remedied by force. A monstrous contest of wickedness is carried on. Daily the lust of sin increases; daily the sense of shame diminishes. Casting away all regard for what is good and honourable, pleasure runs riot without restraint. Vice no longer hides itself, it stalks forth before all eyes. So public has iniquity become, so mightily does it flame up in all hearts, that innocence is no longer even rare; it has altogether ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>

Even religion had become a cloak for the vilest immorality. The priestesses in the temples were prostitutes, and made no attempt to conceal it. When vice can walk abroad unashamed it is not difficult to understand the degree to which a nation has fallen. The geographer Strabo says that in the Temple of Venus in Corinth there were more than one thousand prostitutes. They had great privileges, and sometimes presented to the goddess the vows and prayers of the city.<sup>2</sup> This was also the state of affairs in the temple at Eryx in Sicily, where even Roman consuls and praetors participated in the vileness.<sup>3</sup> So great was the depravity of the age that the Roman government found it necessary to pass special laws prohibiting women of high rank from registering themselves as public prostitutes. This they were in the habit of doing in order to be able to give unbridled rein to their evil passions.

The pastimes and pleasures of the people offer another indication of the depth to which

<sup>1</sup> *De Ira*, ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo viii. 378.

<sup>3</sup> Diod. Sic. iv. 83.

they had fallen. They show that the Romans at the beginning of the Christian era had become wholly unnatural and depraved in their taste. Simple and manly sports no longer attracted them; nothing was interesting without the shedding of blood and the spectacle of death. High and low, rich and poor, flocked to the amphitheatre to see men killed by wild animals, or pitted against each other in mortal combat; for the condemned criminals were trained in the schools attached to the various circuses, and upon great festivals were forced to kill each other to satisfy the unnatural craving for blood. As it may be supposed such customs had a most demoralizing effect upon the public, rendering them day by day more brutal in disposition. The plays of the period also had a most evil effect. Their obscene character doubtless played a very distinct part in bringing about the moral degradation of the people.

Contrast with this dark picture of cruelty, luxury, and vice, the account of the Christian sect as we have it in Section II. *Are we not justified in saying that the contrast is truly astounding?*

What is the spectacle we see? A vast civilization containing within itself all the elements of decay, arrayed against a small community, strong in nothing but its devotion to its crucified Founder, and its obedience to His command. Legislation could not destroy it; when its members were tortured and killed it only grew the more; it thought lightly of those things which the world loved, and longed for the

death which the world feared. The ancient customs and religions, which had been unable to hinder the decay of the countries under their sway, fell one by one before the new faith. The accounts in the first and second sections show how Christianity was received by the Pagan world; we have only to read history to see how paganism fell before it.

There was something in the 'new religion' which made it different from other faiths. The non-Christian Roman statesmen knew that they must give it no quarter, or it would carry everything before it. The historian Lampridius<sup>1</sup>—himself a pagan—writes of the emperor:

He wished to erect a temple to Christ, and to receive him among the gods, as was also said to have been the intention of Hadrian—but he was prohibited by those who, upon consulting the 'rites,' found that if he did that, all would become Christians, and the remaining temples would have to be taken away.

Christo templum facere voluit, eumque inter deos recipere, quod et Hadrianus cogitasse fertur—sed prohibitus est, ab iis, qui, consulentes sacra, reperant omnes Christianos futuros, si id fecisset, et templa reliqua deferenda.

This is a remarkable passage. What could the state religion of the Roman Empire have to fear from this strange faith, the distinctive doctrine of which was devotion to a crucified Jew, and faith that he was the Son of God?

<sup>1</sup> *Scriptores Hist. Aug.*, Lamprid., *Severus*, C. 43 (Teubner). See Lightfoot, *Ignatius* Vol. I, pp. 441-4.

Yet has not history proved that she had good reason to fear?

And what has resulted from the entrance of Christianity into the world? Whether Christ has been truly 'the light of the world' each man will have to decide personally, and as the facts of history are before us we can judge for ourselves. Certain it is that the more familiar we become with the history of humanity during the last nineteen hundred years the more we shall understand that the entrance of Christianity into any land has marked the beginning of a new era in its history. More astonishing still, we find that, in all the countries of Europe, progress, and a knowledge of the New Testament on the part of the common people, have gone hand in hand together.

Wherever this state of affairs exists the advance in civilization has been continuous and rapid. Education has become general. Everywhere poorhouses, hospitals, asylums for orphans and the insane, and numerous other institutions have risen up to meet the various needs of suffering humanity. Human life has come to be valued and respected. A national conscience is gradually making itself more and more evident. In every department of life there is a buoyant spirit of optimism and a feeling that we are advancing to ever greater things.

In countries where Christianity has been accepted, but the New Testament has not been put into the hands of the common people, there has been progress indeed, but progress nothing like so rapid as in other parts of Christendom.



There have been men of the noblest devotion, movements showing in wonderful ways the Christian spirit, but a tendency to stagnation among the masses of the people, and a backwardness in economic and educational evolution. Such countries as Russia and Spain are examples of this tendency.

The argument may be brought forward that Japan is an example of rapid progress and evolution apart from Christianity and a knowledge of the New Testament. But such an argument leaves out of count important factors. Japan has only just awakened, and it is as yet impossible to judge what she will be. It must be remembered that ability to defeat a powerful nation in war, although denoting military and naval efficiency, does not necessarily mean true advance; for war and what pertains to it are only relics of barbarism. Of one thing there is no doubt, Japan's awakening only came when she was brought in contact with two nations, England and America, who esteem the New Testament to be their greatest treasure. As yet Japan has not been original. Her efficiency is mainly western. In the realm of religion she is wavering between Agnosticism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Some of her most prominent statesmen and soldiers are Christians, and the Christian Church in Japan is full of life and energy. Japan may not yet be a Christian land, but let us remember that of all the various schools, hospitals, colleges, and other institutions of the kind, there is not one which has not been modelled upon western lines. The philanthropic



and educational institutions of the Christian west have been the pattern for everything of the kind in Japan. I say 'the Christian west,' because history shows us that almost every philanthropic venture of importance was first conceived and undertaken in the west by Christians.

And now let us turn to India—India the land of deep religious thought and earnest spiritual aspiration. It is as natural to be religious in India as to live and breathe and eat. It is a land of saints and sages, and everywhere one meets those who are hungering for God. Atheism can find but little footing here; for most men recognize that the search for spiritual truth is the highest pursuit of man. Moreover India is the land of the *Vedas*, probably the most ancient religious compositions in existence. While we of the west were wandering in the forests clad in skins, the sages of India were deep in their search for the eternal verities of the spiritual world. Systems of philosophy were built up and gave place to other systems. One thinker followed another, each leaving his contribution to the religious history of his people. Yet where is India to-day?

We are told that in the Vedic age India was in her glory. There was no dishonesty, no impurity, or pride, or jealousy among the people. The Brahmans lived simple, austere, and religious lives. The kings were brave and upright and faithful as Janaka. Women were as pure and loving as Sita. Sons were as obedient as Rama. Younger brothers were as dutiful as Bharata and Lachman. The forests were full of

saints and rishies; the dwellers in the towns were devoted to religion. Divine wisdom was among them in the form of the *Vedas*. Yet where is India to-day?

The *Vedas* are said to contain the perfect and final wisdom of God. How could those who possessed this final wisdom come under the dominion of error and delusion? Are we to believe that even the perfect revelation of God Himself will be unable to keep us from degeneration and degradation? Even suppose we again attain to that perfect condition of society which is said to have existed in Vedic times, how can we hope to continue in it? If we have enjoyed it once, and then fallen from it, what will prevent us from again falling into degradation after having attained to perfection a second time? If this be true, who would blame India for settling down in torpor and inertia? Why strive if we know that the attainment of our ideal is to be followed by another period of degeneration and decay? The saints of all countries and all ages have impressed upon our minds that we are not to set our mind upon things fleeting and temporal, but upon those things which are eternal. If the perfection to which we are hoping to attain be only temporal, followed by more degeneration and decay, why strive for it? If it is only temporal why long for it?

It is here that the great contrast lies. Hindu religious history—if we are to accept the claims of those who assert that there was perfection in the Sath Yug—presents the spectacle of a people living in a state of spiritual and social perfection, and blessed with the full revelation of God, yet

gradually falling from that high estate and degenerating spiritually and socially, until they have reached their present position, which they call the Kali Yug.

On the other hand take the history of Christianity as we find it in this book independently of Christian records. It does not claim to have first revealed itself to a perfected society. The world had never been in a more evil condition than at the time it first made its appearance. According to Hindu belief God's wisdom, as revealed in the *Vedas*, was unable to save man from falling under the power of delusion and degradation. According to the history of Christianity, all the forces of evil, the wisdom of the world, the material Roman Empire, the hatred and contempt and persecutions of the masses, were unable to hinder the spread of the Christian faith. As a light dispelling the darkness it came with its higher ideals and loftier manner of life. Wherever it found root it seemed to bring new life. The messengers of the gospel of peace traversed the great forests which before had echoed to the tread of marauding armies. The latter had gone in their strength to kill and take captive; the former went in their weakness, not to kill, but if need be to die for their faith. Yet in the end it was not the Roman legions which conquered the Germanic tribes, but the gospel of Christ. This, too, is history, as all who read may know. Throughout Europe and America, as we have already pointed out, spiritual, mental, and material progress are most evident where the New Testament is most treasured and read.

To put it in a few words. If Vedic times were

perfect times, the Hindu position has been *the Vedas and a steady degeneration*. The position of Christianity according to history has been *the New Testament and steady progress toward the light*. The history of Hinduism, according to both Sanyatin Dharmists and Arya Samajists alike, has been *from light to darkness*. The history of Christianity has been *from darkness into an ever increasing light*.

Now this is the very thing which makes it necessary for us to consider the question for ourselves. If the gospel accounts are correct Christ makes claims which are tremendous and unique. Not only does He make such claims, but from His days until our own we find those who serve Him claiming with one voice that they have found in Him the peace of soul, the strength in temptation, and the sense of the forgiveness of sins, which He promised to give to those who serve Him and love Him. They had nothing earthly to gain by such an assertion, and nothing heavenly, unless the assertions were true. Yet martyrs have joyfully witnessed to the strength and peace that Christ has given them in the midst of fearful tortures. Christians at the hour of death have claimed that they have felt the comfort of His loving presence. Those who have lost father or mother or children say that they have felt His love and sympathy sustaining them in their hour of trial, and trusting in His promise have looked forward to meeting their loved ones again. The world laughs and scoffs at the claims of Christ, but has the world peace? No, the world has not peace of soul, but those who love Jesus find their peace in Him, and with one

voice they bless Him that He has allowed them to endure shame for His sake.

I have said that He makes tremendous claims—startling claims, such as no other ever made. The history of His followers has been almost equally startling and tremendous. Christ sent out twelve men—ignorant fishermen and the like—to give His message to the world. Most of these were killed for their faith, but the Christians began to increase. Every means was used to blot out the faith; those who professed it were thrown to the lions, burned at the stake, roasted to death, torn and lacerated and flayed alive, thrown into the sea, and sent to labour in the mines; but even then the faith continued to grow and spread. The world did not know how to deal with such people. It could not win them by offers of worldly wealth, for as Lucian remarks they ‘despised’ it. It could not intimidate them, for as the same writer says they thought lightly of death, and were quite willing to die. It could not conquer them in battle for they would not resist. Finally, Europe acknowledged itself defeated and came to the feet of Christ.

But what was Christ? In the eyes of the world He was only an obscure Jew. And yet no one familiar with history can deny that this individual, executed as only the lowest criminals were executed, has been the greatest spiritualizing power in the world for nearly two thousand years. Who was He? What was the nature of His influence? When One whose influence has affected the whole history of the world, makes certain claims, ought we not to give those claims most serious consideration?



## APPENDIX I.

### CELSUS.

CELSUS, the Epicurean, was, without doubt, the most formidable of the literary opponents of Christianity in the second century. His attacks upon the Christian religion are marked by a spirit of great hostility, and his method of approaching the subject shows that he was a man of keen and vigorous intellect. His book was called *The True Discourse* (ἀληθὺς λόγος). It is only known from Origen's reply to it, but as Origen quotes his adversary's words, and answers them point by point, we may gather the original work of Celsus from his pages. This Apology of Origen is the greatest of the Apologies. Eusebius says of it: 'At this time also, he composed in eight books a reply to that work written against us by Celsus, the Epicurean, bearing the title, *The True Doctrine*'. The work of Celsus was written some eighty years before Origen's answer to it, or about A.D. 170.

We can only touch upon a few of the points taken up by Celsus. Of course, wherever he alludes to anything in the history of Christ or Christianity, he does so in order to attack it. His allusions are valuable because they show what the Christian belief was at the period when he made them the subject of his attacks. We cannot hope to do more than mention some of



the subjects touched upon by him, and in one or two instances quote his words.

Celsus speaks of Christ as 'one who has but lately appeared among men' (VIII, 12).

He says of him: 'A short time ago he began to teach this doctrine, being regarded by the Christians as "The Son of God"' (I, 26).

Celsus asserts that the doctrines which he attacks are those of the 'Books' of the Christians (II, 74).

He attacks the doctrine of the Incarnation (IV, 2-30).

He alludes to Joseph as 'the carpenter' (v, 52).

Mentions the coming of the Magi, to worship the infant Jesus as God (I, 58).

Speaks of the Flight into Egypt (I, 66; v, 52).

Alludes to the Massacre of the Innocents by Herod (I, 58).

Attacks the account of the descent of a dove upon Jesus at the time of His baptism (I, 41).

Also the account of the Voice from heaven proclaiming Christ to be the Son of God (I, 72).

Also the Christian belief that Christ is the Son of God (II. first half; VI, 72, 74; VIII, 14, and elsewhere).

Speaking of Christ's teachings, he said: 'the man of Nazareth promulgated laws quite opposite to these (the laws of Moses) declaring that no one can come to the Father who loves power or riches or glory; that men ought not to be more careful in providing food than the ravens; that they were to be less concerned about their raiment than the lilies; that to him that has given them one blow they should offer to receive another'

(vii, 18): He quotes, 'Whosoever shall strike thee on one cheek, turn to him the other also' (vii, 58).

Alludes to Christ's followers as 'tax-gatherers and sailors' (i, 62) and asserts that He was 'deserted and delivered up by those who had been his associates, and had shared all things in common, and had had him for their teacher, who was deemed to be a Saviour, and a son of the greatest God' (ii, 9).

Scoffingly alludes to the agony of Christ, and quotes him as saying: 'Oh Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me' (ii, 24).

Calls Christ 'the crucified Jesus' (ii, 36).

Speaks of those who slew him as 'those who crucified your God' (viii, 41).

Attacks the Christian belief that Christ 'endured these sufferings for the benefit of mankind' (ii, 38).

Attempts to disprove the reality of the Resurrection of Christ (ii, 59, 70).

Refers to the angels who appeared at the tomb of Jesus (v, 56).

Speaks of the angel rolling away the stone from the tomb (v, 52).

Tries to show the foolishness of the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body (v, 14).

Laughs at the Christians for saying 'The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world' (v, 64).

After referring to the enthusiasm with which Christians encountered death rather than abjure Christianity (viii, 48), Celsus says: 'Besides is it not most absurd and inconsistent in you, on the one hand, to make so much of the body as you do, expecting that the same body will rise

again, as though it were the best and most precious part of us; and yet, on the other to expose it to such tortures, as though it were worthless?' (VIII, 49).

Alluding to the persecution of the Christians, Celsus says: 'Do you not see, good sir, that even your own *daimon* (he means Christ) is not only reviled, but banished from every land and sea; and you yourself, who are as it were an image dedicated to him, are bound and led to punishment, and fastened to the stake, whilst your *daimon*—or, as you call Him, "The Son of God"—takes no vengeance on the evil doer?' (VIII, 39).

So much for Celsus. His witness is useful because it shows that what this writer of the second century found in the 'books' of the Christians must have been what we find in them to-day. It is interesting to note that he does not deny that Christ performed miracles, but attributes his ability to work them to the aid of devils and to magic (I, 6).

## APPENDIX II.

### THE FATE OF EARLY ANTI-CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

CELSUS was not the only man of letters who attacked the early Church. The Neo-Platonist, Porphyry, wrote fifteen books against the faith of the Christians. Methodius of Tyre, Eusebius of Cæsarea, and Apollinaris of Laodicea wrote refutations of these, but the refutations have perished, and of the works of Porphyry, against

which they were directed, we possess but a few fragments. Hierocles also wrote a work called *Truth-loving Words*, which is known to us only by its refutation by Eusebius. The *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* by Philostratus may be considered a part of the polemics against Christianity.

It may have occurred to the reader to question why so many of the works of the Early Fathers remain with us, while not a single early work against Christianity is extant. There are several reasons for this. Perhaps the principal was an edict of the Christian emperor Justinian (527-65). Unfortunately this ruler took a great interest in all matters theological, and used his power as Emperor to enforce his own beliefs. He closed the philosophical schools of Athens, ordered that his subjects be baptized on pain of the confiscation of their property and exile, and issued an edict (Codex I. tit. 1, const. 3) enjoining the suppression of all books written against the Christian religion. It is this last measure which we must consider largely responsible for the loss of all early anti-Christian literature, not only on account of the great number of such books which must have been destroyed at the time, but because of the precedent which it established for so destroying them.

A like measure had been taken against the Christians in the reign of Diocletian, when 'edicts were everywhere published to tear down the churches to the foundation, and to destroy the Sacred Scriptures by fire' (Euseb. *H. E.* VIII, 2). But with the Christians it had been a matter of conscience, and by far the greater

number would have died rather than give up the Scriptures. But those who were possessed of works against the Christian faith could have no such religious scruples about surrendering them, and few would be foolish enough to persist in retaining them, when so doing would entail the loss of home and property. Thus it was that the anti-Christian literature perished, while the books of the Christians remained to witness the devotion of those who preserved them, even at the cost of their lives.

Justinian was true to the spirit of his time when he issued the above edict. For the next thousand years misdirected religious zeal and fanatic vandalism deemed that, in destroying the monuments of paganism, it was 'doing God a service'. Through those dark ages the monasteries were the only places where books might be reasonably safe from destruction. In them the holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers were treasured and copied and handed down from one generation to another. But the writings of Celsus and other enemies of the Christian religion could find no place within the walls of these monasteries. The consequence was that they stood but small chance of surviving until a time when their value would be realized.

### APPENDIX III.

PART OF THE TEXT OF A LETTER FROM THE  
EMPEROR HADRIAN TO SERVIANUS.

HADRIANUS AUGUSTUS Serviano Consuli salutem. Aegyptum, quam mihi laudabas, Serviane



carissime, totam didici levem, pendulam, et ad omnia famae momenta volitantem. Illi, qui Serapem colunt, Christiani sunt, et devoti sunt Serapi qui se CHRISTI EPISCOPOS dicunt. Nemo illic Archisynagogus Judæorum, nemo Samarites, nemo Christianorum PRESBYTER, non mathematicus, non haruspex, non alyptēs. Ipse ille patriarcha cum Aegyptum venerit, ab aliis Serapidem adorare ab aliis cogitur Christum. Genus hominum, seditiosissimum, vanissimum, injuriosissimum; civitas opulenta, dives, fœcunda, in qua nemo vivat otiosus.<sup>1</sup> . . . Unus illis deus nummus est.

[*Translation.*]

Hadrian Augustus greets Servianus the Consul.

MY VERY DEAR SERVIANUS,

Egypt of which you spoke so highly I have found to be light, fickle, fluttering at every touch of rumour. Those who profess to worship Serapis are Christians, and those who call themselves Christian Bishops are devotees of Serapis. There is not a ruler of a Jewish Synagogue there, there is not a Samaritan, there is not a Christian Presbyter who is not a wizard or a soothsayer or a scoundrel of some sort. Pressure is put on the Patriarch himself when he comes to Egypt on the one hand to adore Serapis on the other Christ. As a race they are full of sedition, vanity and spite. The community is opulent, rich, fruitful, without a man of leisure in it. Cash is their only god.

Vopiscus was one of those six authors who

<sup>1</sup> Vopiscus, *Vita Saturnini*, 8. (Scriptores Historiæ Augustæ, Teubner.)



are called 'Historiæ Augustæ Scriptores'. He was born in Syracuse, A.D. 303. The epistle from which the above has been quoted was cited by him while speaking of the Egyptians. He says that he discovered it in the works of Phlegon, and believes it to be authentic. Phlegon was one of Hadrian's freedmen, who wrote a number of books on various subjects of which some fragments only remain.

One thing is most probable ; that whether the letter is truly from the hand of Hadrian or not, it was edited by one who lived during his rule (A.D. 117-138). We may therefore feel justified in believing that we are in possession of a non-Christian document written by some one either during, or at most shortly after, Hadrian's time, in which distinct mention is made of Christian bishops and presbyters. The 'patriarch' is the Jewish patriarch of Tiberias. Lightfoot,<sup>1</sup> who is one of the greatest modern authorities on the subject, writes with regard to the letter : 'This document is considered genuine by such opposite authorities as Tillemont (*Hist. de Emp.* II, p. 265) and Gregorovius (l.c. p. 41) and may be accepted without hesitation.'

#### APPENDIX IV.

ÆLIUS LAMPRIDIUS, writing upon the reign of Elagabalus (A.D. 218-22) relates how that emperor made plans for a temple on the Palatine

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, Vol. I, p. 465, writes : The genuineness of the letter has been generally, though not universally allowed. The quotation in the text is from his edition of *Philippians*, p. 223.

hill, in which he might collect together all the cults of the various Roman gods, and thither also he intended to transfer the Jewish and Samaritan 'religiones' and the Christian 'devotionem,' that he, Elagabalus, might be Priest of them all.

'Dicebat præterea, Judæorum et Samaritanorum religiones, et Christianam devotionem illuc transferendam, ut omnium culturarum secretum Heliogabali sacerdotium teneret.'<sup>1</sup>

Lampridius wrote about A.D. 310. It is interesting to note the distinction made by this author. He makes a difference between the Faiths of the Jews and Samaritans, and Christianity. The two first he calls 'religiones,' the latter a 'devotio'. The former word was that commonly used by the Romans when speaking of the various cults found throughout the world. 'Devotio' means 'a devoting' or 'a consecrating'. The writer, living as he did during the fierce persecutions under the emperors Diocletian and Maximinus (sc. Euseb. *H. E.* VII and IX) could not have failed to see that becoming a Christian was indeed a consecration and devotion, since it meant that those who took the step would, in so many cases, be called upon to bear 'fire, sword, and crucifixions, savage beasts, and the depths of the sea, the maiming of limbs, and searing with red-hot iron, pricking and digging out of the eyes, and the mutilations of the whole body, also hunger, and mines,<sup>2</sup> and prisons' (Euseb. *H. E.* VIII, c. 14).

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Aug.*, Bipt., vol. I, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> By mines is meant 'penal servitude'. Criminals were sentenced to work in mines.





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